



Transitions from Phonics to Comprehension - A focus on fluency



Why, What, When and How?

In the Summer of 2024, our Phonics results indicated to us that we needed to be more rigorous in our teaching of phonics. We therefore invested a heavy amount of time, staffing and budget in raising the quality of our phonic offer. As a result, our results are now indicating that 92% of our pupils will achieve the Phonic Screening Check this year, with that rising to 100% for pupils who have been with us from the start of their phonic learning journey. Having secured a high-quality phonic provision, we moved our attention to reviewing the rest of our reading curriculum. As a school who places reading is at the heart of everything we do and who knows the importance of high-quality reading instruction for pupils for their future learning and success, we looked carefully at the Reading Framework, the OFSTED Subject Review for English, the EEF Literacy Guidance and the work of Chris Such, and made some adaptations to our KS2 reading offer to continue our strive to raising standards for all. We have carefully developed our curriculum with the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and those experiencing disadvantage, when structuring what our reading curriculum looks like and the pedagogy we use to deliver it. As part of this work, we carefully considered what our bridging provision from RWI to reading comprehension would look like. We then selected RWI comprehension for this provision because we believe it is well-sequenced and progressive, but also helps to develop fluency. We wanted to choose a provision which would reduce cognitive load for pupils and enable them to smoothly continue their reading journey sequentially. We chose to introduce RWI comprehension to provide this fluency bridge from phonics to comprehension for the following reasons:

- RWI comprehension closely matches the expectations and routines of RWI phonics, reducing the cognitive load for pupils which would be created by transitioning to a new approach. A consistent approach means we are focussing the power of children's thinking brains on the skills of reading – not on routines and expectations.
- RWI comprehension focusses on building fluency with longer and progressively more complex texts than those used at the end of the RW phonics programme, ensuring the transition between programmes is neither too challenging nor too simple. We call this a Goldilocks transition as the level of challenge in the texts is 'just right'.
- RWI comprehension has both fiction and non-fiction texts in every unit so pupils are building their reading miles as well as their knowledge and experience of different genres of texts in preparation for the broad variety of texts they will continue to explore in KS2.
- The Teacher 'Read aloud' section of each lessons helps to build fluency through modelling by an 'expert' reader.
- Targeted questioning planned throughout each lesson helps pupils to build strong mental models of what they read over increasingly complex and lengthy texts.
- Decoding practice of unfamiliar words helps to build automaticity – a key part of fluency.
- Vocabulary exploration helps to expose pupils to new vocabulary in a meaningful context which helps to build a schema around new language.
- Grammar and punctuation development are also supported through the modules.
- Planned partner work and oracy opportunities allow cognitive capacity to focus on reading skills rather than writing skills so cognitive demand is targeted at the focus skills for the lesson.

We believe that using RWI Comprehension as a bridge between our Phonic and Comprehension provision will improve standards in Reading in KS2 through supporting in fluency development which is foundational for strong comprehension skills when reading.

